

Corps Connection

A Monthly Publication for Alabama Citizen Corps Councils, their Partners and Affiliates

March 2006

Alabama Citizen Corps is a program of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

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Alabama's Citizen Corps Newsletter has a Name!!!

The *Corps Connection*, sent in by Donna Long of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, was voted the new name for Alabama's Citizen Corps newsletter. *Corps Connection* was chosen from a list of nine submissions (anonymous to the voters), and though Donna is an employee of GFBCI, no foul play is suspected...

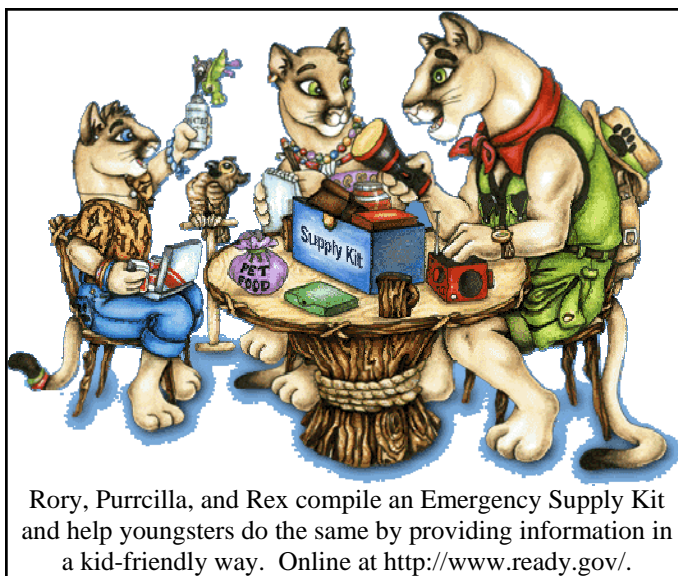
Congratulations Donna!!!

U.S. Homeland Security Launches READY KIDS

From comic strips and crossword puzzles to card games and scavenger hunts, U.S. Homeland Security's READY KIDS has a variety of gimmicks and insightful information for kids.

READY KIDS targets children in the 4th and 5th grades, and helps them learn in kid-friendly ways how to be prepared for the next natural or man-made disaster.

READY KIDS features an animated Mountain Lion family of three: Rex, as the husband and father, Purrcilla as the mother and wife, and Rory as the daughter. These cartoon characters, drawn by a former Disney animator, Betsy Baytos, are appealing to younger children and adults alike. Once kids log





onto READY Kids, they can scroll through a variety of activities, all focused around the following three areas: creating an emergency supply kit, preparing a plan, and learning about different types of disasters.

READY Kids was launched in early February 2006 and was developed in consultation with the American Red Cross, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the American Psychological Association, and the U.S. Department of Education, among others. Children, parents, and teachers can all find resources on the READY KIDS website by visiting www.ready.gov.

CERT ON WHEELS IN JEFFERSON COUNTY



Meet the newest edition of the Jefferson County CERT training team: the training support unit. According to Michael Harter of the Jefferson County EMA, this trailer includes everything: four propane burn pans, fire extinguishers, a gas trainer, cribbing and pry bars, two rescue Randy's, blankets, triangular bandages and 4X4 dressings. A certified trainer leading a CERT course will use this trailer for hands-on support and learning.

You can also find this trailer drawing crowds at two upcoming events. The Citizen Corps Council of Jefferson County will host a tent at the County's Community Awareness Day on March 30, 2006 promoting the CERT program. The trailer and team will make another appearance a few weeks later at the NBC 13 Health and Wellness Festival – an event that often brings 20,000 people! The Citizen Corps umbrella at this event will include information about all the programs with an emphasis on preparedness. Way to get out on the road, Jefferson County!



SPOTLIGHT ON HELENA

City of Helena Police Department – EXPLORER'S PROGRAM
Beginning in 1998, the Police Department in Helena initiated the Explorer's Program, engaging 15 to 21-yr.-olds in volunteer service to their police department.

The program began as a project to assist in administrative needs, mostly involving community events like parking and crowd control. Soon, the Explorer's Program became the largest VIPS program in Alabama, receiving recognition from different organizations for their volunteers and service campaigns.

After working a Bruno's Memorial Classic with the Bruno's event staff, the Explorers Program



The Helena Explorers Program wins 2004 National Law Enforcement Explorer Competition in Atlanta, Georgia.
Good Luck this Year!!!

was hired on a year-round basis to work for Barber's events team of Barber's Motor Sports, on all state events. In return Barber and other affiliated organizations continue to make donations to the scholarship programs associated with the police department. The money provides financial support for students or for service programs like the Neighborhood Watch Program and CAP.

The Explorers now work in a range of programs including the CAP (Citizens And Police) project which replaced Neighborhood Watch. CAP takes Neighborhood Watch a step further, providing educational booths at community events and providing volunteers for community service opportunities. The



Explorers also create identification

cards for kids in the neighborhoods, which provide their personal information and their fingerprints on the back. The cards include a loop for baby strollers.

Outreach continues to be a priority in these programs, particularly with sponsors eager to be a part of the collaboration growing between the communities and the police department. The team was recently awarded 2 portable X-Box units as a means of engaging kids and ultimately educating them on crime prevention and safety. The Hummer company in Helena has also cast an offer in their direction.

The Explorer's Program in Helena also received national attention for development initiatives, including the 'Teen for Teen' drug abuse program that was adopted by the Drug Enforcement Agency, which engages teenagers in the fight against drug abuse. The Explorer's and the Helena Police Department received the "Teen Drug Abuse Prevention Award" in 2004 from the DEA, a national award presented every other year. They also received a \$1000 grant to continue this initiative.

All of this work culminated at the National Law Enforcement Explorers Conference in 2004 where the unit received national recognition for their Explorers Program.

This March, as a result of all the achievements in Helena, the International Association of Chiefs of Police will be filming their program with a \$250,000 grant from the Department of Justice. Once the film is completed, highlighting this successful VIPS program, it will arrive by mail, at every United States law enforcement agency in the country and abroad. A hearty CONGRATULATIONS to the Explorers Program, the Police Department, and the City of Helena on a job well done! For more information on these programs: <http://webpages.charter.net/helenaexplorers/>.



The Helena Police Department Explorers' exhibit at the 2002 competition.



You're Invited! Meet-and-Greet Your Fellow Medical Reserve Corps Communities!

The Fourth Annual Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) National Leadership and Training Conference will be held April 18-21, 2006, at the Hyatt Regency Dallas Hotel at Reunion in Dallas, Texas. Join national government and nongovernmental organizations, emergency response and public health experts, and other community volunteers for this 4-day, knowledge-sharing conference. This year's MRC Conference will provide information on many topics, including volunteer management training, a keynote speech on the pandemic flu, and an expert panel on mass catastrophic disaster event planning, just to name a few! Geared towards newly formed and thoroughly seasoned MRC units, we hope that all Medical Reserve Corps communities can attend and take part in this informational exchange. For more information, or to register, please visit www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

SALUTING CANE CREEK



Chief: Rocky Bell
Assistant Chief: Paul Blackman
Deputy Chief: Dan Lawrence
Warrior, AL

Recently, the Cane County Volunteer Fire Department and Fire Corps programs lowered their Insurance Services Office (ISO) score from a nine to a four. In other words, with three years of dedication and hard work, they successfully improved their safety measures, bringing their score down five points. FEMA awarded the department two different grants in this process, one for turn-out gear and a second for equipment which supported their efforts in lowering their ISO score. Now, with 27 volunteers registered and 20 active volunteers on duty, the department hopes to replace two of their fire trucks, 1974 and 1980 models, respectively. Ultimately, their work is centered around their community. Chief Rocky Bell shared, "They look after us and so we look after them."



VISTA Disaster Response and Recovery Team

The Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI) currently has six AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members serving alongside regular staff in the office. Led by GFBCI Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator, Alison Welty, the first five members began in early November. Just last month, in early February, our sixth member, Jamey Lowdermilk, joined the team. The team is working on a variety of projects, including but not limited to, setting up an Interfaith Disaster Network, writing and implementing a ten-year plan to end homelessness, and coordinating volunteers and donations for the state of Alabama.

Each month we will introduce a member of the Alabama Disaster Response and Recovery Team. March's team member of the month is Louisa Lichtman.

VISTA of the Month—Louisa Lichtman

My name is Louisa Lichtman. Last May I graduated with a Religious Studies Degree and an Art minor from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. My friends and family members always looked skeptical when I informed them of my choice of major. Mainly they berated me with "What are you going to do with a Religious Studies Degree?" I chose my major, not only because I felt it had one of the best faculty departments at my school, but because religion fascinates me and the study combines many of my interests. I now love to tell all the skeptics: "Ha, I am actually using my major in my current position as an AmeriCorps*VISTA at the Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives where I am co-coordinating the Interfaith Disaster Network."



Upcoming Events

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE:

The National Sheriffs' Association in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U. S. Department of Justice is pleased to announce that they are accepting nominations for the 3rd Annual National Neighborhood Watch Awards of Excellence to be presented during the General Session of the 2006 National Sheriffs' Association Conference in Orlando, Florida. All law enforcement agencies, Neighborhood Watch groups, organizations, and/or programs that have made an exceptional contribution to the Neighborhood Watch program in their communities are encouraged to submit nominations to the National Sheriffs' Association by March 31, 2006.

JEFFERSON COUNTY: On March 30, 2006, Jefferson County will hold a Community Awareness Day to promote disaster awareness among school children and adults by increasing their knowledge of disaster preparedness and preventative techniques. This free event will be held at Linn Park & Short 20th Street from 9:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m. For more information, please visit www.impactalabama.com

MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS (MRC) NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING CONFERENCE:

Join your fellow MRC volunteers for three days of sharing at the Hyatt Regency Dallas Hotel at Reunion in Dallas, Texas. Expert panels, engaging speakers, volunteer management training... DON'T MISS IT, April 18-21, 2006!

Give us something to work with.

The Alabama Citizen Corps Council is looking for articles, pictures, updates, lessons learned, tips, useful websites and events for this monthly newsletter. Please send any information on Citizen Corps, CERT, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, or anything else of interest to Citizen Corps Councils to: alison.welty@servealabama.gov. Submissions are due by the 15th of each month to be published in the following month's newsletter, space permitting.

March's Tip of the Month!

A community working together during an emergency makes sense.

- ♦ **Talk to your neighbors** about how you can work together during an emergency.
- ♦ **Find out if anyone has specialized equipment** like a power generator, or expertise such as medical knowledge, that might help in a crisis.
- ♦ **Decide who will check on elderly or disabled neighbors.**
- ♦ **Make back-up plans for children** in case you can't get home in an emergency.
- ♦ **Sharing plans and communicating in advance** is always a good strategy.



It's Never Too Early to Think Ahead...

National Preparedness Month (September) will be here before we know it! Just remember it's never too early to start thinking about the kind of projects you would like to launch in your community to help everyone become more prepared for disasters of all kinds.

Send Us Your Feedback!

Have suggestions or ideas for topics? Please send them to Megan Bayha at megan.bayha@servealabama.gov.

The *Citizen Corps Newsletter* is a monthly publication of the Alabama Citizen Corps Council, a program of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI). To be added or removed from our distribution list, please contact the GFBCI via email at info@servealabama.gov.